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## Mouw, Henry Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

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Oral History Interview with  
Henry Mouw

Conducted June 10, 1997  
by Ann Paeth

Sesquicentennial Oral History Project  
"150 Stories for 150 Years"

Sesquicentennial Oral History Project  
Interview with Rev. Henry Mouw  
June 10, 1997  
Interviewer: Ann Paeth

AP: For starters, could you state your name, when and where you were born, and then when you came to Holland.

HM: My name is Henry A. Mouw. I was born in Orange City, Iowa. There are many, many students from Iowa who come to western Michigan to pursue their studies at Hope College, and then, in my case, after I graduated from Hope College in 1940, I stayed on in Holland, and went to Western Seminary, from which I graduated in 1943. So I've been in the active pastorate for forty years, actually, serving churches full time. Now, I've been retired almost fourteen years.

AP: Where have been the churches that you served?

HM: I served only two congregations. We started our ministry sixty miles north of Holland, in the community of New Era, which is north of Muskegon, about twenty five miles. Then we came to Holland in 1949, and we served the Sixth Reformed Church until I retired, in 1983. But I still work in my vocation. My work has taken a little different direction than when I was full-time in ministry. I'm involved in the calling ministry in the congregation where we belong at the present time, First Reformed Church of Holland. And I do some part time work for our denomination, I serve the Board of Pensions as the senior pastor for the midwest area, which includes all the Great Lakes states. There are more than two hundred people in this third parish that I have. So it keeps me quite busy. Then I do some teaching of Bible

classes here and there. I do some preaching in the western Michigan area. So, our retirement has been semi-retirement, really.

AP: Could you describe how your church has changed through the past several years, both the one you served at and maybe the one you're involved in now, especially through the major changes of Holland, like the city's growth? How has that affected it?

HM: I've seen many, many changes occur over the course of forty or fifty years in the ministry. For one thing, in my day, churches, for the most part, had solo pastorates. That is to say, there was one minister who preached, usually, two times a Sunday, conducted a midweek service, taught Catechism classes, and did all the pastoral work in addition to that. So that kept one very, very busy, of course. Now, there are more specialized ministries. Most of the congregations in western Michigan, and I'm think particularly of Holland, have staff ministries. One minister may zero in on preaching and administration, another one may zero in on Christian education and congregational care, and there are different ways in which the duties are divided among the members of the staff. Now, in our congregation, First Reformed Church, we have two pastors, full-time, and we have a couple of secretaries. That's a luxury many of us didn't have either, during the course of our pastorates. We have a youth minister, and we have three calling pastors. So there are quite a few of us who do the work which one was expected to do, pretty much, some years ago.

AP: Has the congregation grown because of that, or is that a result of the change in the size of the congregation?

HM: Well, the needs of people, I think, are different than they used to be. There are

many family problems today. There's a lot of counseling that needs to be done.

Young people are under tremendous peer pressure today, and they need some guidance and help along the way. I think, people in the congregations are looking for churches to present programs to meet those needs. That's one reason why we have a larger number of people on the staff than was true in former years.

AP: Have you stayed involved with Hope's campus and Western Theological Seminary much through the years?

HM: Oh yes, we have. We visit the Hope College campus quite frequently for plays and luncheons and we follow the football team in the fall, but, particularly, the basketball program in the wintertime. We are all great boosters for Hope College basketball. A year ago when the Hope College team went to the final four in Salem, Virginia, some of the members of our family flew over there, and we had a very, very exciting weekend. Had we gone to the final four again this year, we would have gone back to Salem this year. But, maybe next year. Then, yes, I've attended lectures at Western Seminary, and still use their library quite frequently. Of course, we meet faculty members, in an informal way, all the time. Musical activities. The faculty concerts on Sunday afternoons are attended by us, for the most part. The Christmas Vespers have come to be a tradition for our family. We wouldn't miss that for anything.

AP: How have you seen the college and the seminary change?

HM: Well, speaking first of all for the seminary, in my day, it was an all male school. That's true in regard to the student body, and also so far as the faculty is concerned. Whereas today, probably twenty-five or thirty percent of the students are female at

the seminary. There are also some women who serve on the faculty at the seminary. In regard to the student body at Hope College, it's much more diversified than when we were there. Many, many international students come today, whereas in our day at Hope College, they were few and far between. I think that's good that these people are coming here. I think it's good for the students who are in residence, who have been born and raised here, it's good for us to become acquainted with people of different cultures and races, because our world is shrinking, dramatically, in the course of our lifetime. From the viewpoint of Christian witness, I think, here, too, we can be a real witness for these students, who come, often times, from non-Christian cultures. So far as the graduates of the seminary are concerned, there are opportunities for service in many areas today, which weren't true when I was there. In my day, one went either to a full-time pastorate, as a single pastor, or one went to the mission field. Whereas today, young men and young women go into teaching, counseling, social services, and so on, youth work, to mention but a few activities.

AP: How has the role of both of those campuses in Holland changed, the physical campus, and the role, too, of the student body and the institutions within the community? Has that changed?

HM: I think there's more involvement now on the part of students in the community than there used to be true. For example, in the religious department, which is headed by the Chaplain's staff, I think that the students are encouraged to participate in the community, let their presence be known.

AP: What brought you to school here?

HM: As I said, I was born in Orange City, Iowa. I took my first two years at a junior college in Orange City, which at that time was called Northwestern Junior College. Then I wasn't sure, at the end of my sophomore year, what direction my life should take. So I stayed out of college for a year, and I worked with my dad on the farm. I liked farming, too. I loved to see crops grow, loved to work with animals, and so on. Had I not become a preacher, I guess I would have been a farmer. But at the end of that year, working on the farm, I decided that farming was not for me. So I decided to enter the ministry. There were many young men, particularly, from northwest Iowa, who were going to Hope College. I guess, hearing about Hope College through them, and hearing about Hope College through my pastor at home, I decided that was the place for me to go. So, after Hope College, it was natural for me to continue on at Western Seminary as well. There are two seminaries which the Reformed Church is affiliated with. Western, here in Holland, and then New Brunswick, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. But most of the students from northwest Iowa, at that time, went to Western Seminary. So I guess it was just an interest in Western, which I had heard about for many, many years, which drew me to stay here. I have had two, very happy pastorates. A long pastorate, as we had in Holland, has many benefits. You establish life-long relationships and friendships. You become involved much more in family relationships than you are able to do if you stay for only four or five or six years. Even today, even though we've been out of the active ministry for all these years, we still are contacted by people of our former parishes. A couple of years ago, I was invited to return to our congregation

in New Era, because they were celebrating their centennial, and they asked me to preach the anniversary sermon, because I happened to be the longest living former pastor. So, we had a good time with the people there. Lovely, lovely potluck dinner at noon. In a few weeks, we're going to go back to New Era, for a Sunday morning in July, because the community is celebrating its 125th anniversary. Once again, I've been asked to come back and preach the anniversary sermon. So far as Sixth Reformed Church is concerned, we meet people from the congregation, on an informal basis, in and around town, all the time. Once in a while, I'm still asked to conduct a funeral service for some of those people with whom we worked so well and so long, many years ago.

AP: When you came to school here, what did you study before going on to seminary? Did you have a religion major?

HM: Oh yes. My major in Hope College, was philosophy. But then, in addition to that, in preparation for going to the seminary, I studied two years of Greek, and I studied German. I studied Latin. I took a semester of conversational Dutch, which has helped us a great deal in our travels to Europe in more recent years. I know the first time that we took two of our girls along with us to Europe, I started talking Dutch to some of the people over there. They were quite aghast, they said, "Dad, we didn't know you could talk Dutch!" Because, it's not used around here very much anymore, of course.

AP: What other kinds of classes did you have to take?

HM: English, I had a lot of English courses. Social studies, and history. Quite typical, I



think, of a well rounded liberal arts education.

AP: Did you have sciences?

HM: Well, I took the minimum required in the sciences, that was all. As I remember, I took a year of chemistry, and biology, too. But the physical sciences were not my forte. I was really more interested in the humanities.

AP: So, then the campus both of Hope and Western, which is intermingled, has changed a lot?

HM: Yes. In fact, there are some people who are of the opinion that Western Seminary is a branch of Hope College, which is really not true. Western Seminary and Hope College are incorporated independently of each other. They have their own administrative faculties, they have their own boards of control, they have their own budgets. It just happens that they are across the streets from each other.

AP: I think the only things that are intertwined are the buildings, almost, and their library systems. Which is very nice, actually. Like you said, you still go to their libraries.

HM: In fact, the historical data of Western Seminary is stored, I think, in the Archives of Hope College.

AP: A lot of people don't realize that we have three distinct collections. We have the Hope Archives, the Western Archives, and the Trust, which is the city of Holland, and they all remain separate. Even there, they are two separate entities.

HM: I think we're fortunate to have such a fine physical facility in which to store these Archives.

AP: Did you see now that they're adding onto Western Seminary, it looks like more

housing. They're adding a whole new row.

HM: Oh yes, that's right. The old housing of Western Seminary left much to be desired.

AP: Where and what was that?

HM: It was really right across the street from where the main campus is right now. Where this new housing development has taken place and is being enlarged today. Those were all old houses. Many of them were converted to two-family houses. But, they were not very good for the students to live in. In fact, some of them were really fire traps. It was high time that they be replaced with something better for the students.

AP: When did you get married?

HM: We got married in 1943, at the First Reformed Church in Holland, by Dr. Bastian Kreithuf.

AP: I'm assuming you met your wife when you went to Hope.

HM: Right, at Hope. I really spotted her as a young girl with her family at First Reformed Church. (laughs) Then we were married later on. Interestingly, ours was the first church wedding which he performed at First Church, after he came to Holland. Now, Reverend Kreithuf is not living anymore, but his widow is. We continue to have contact with her.

AP: You married how soon after graduation? And were still in seminary?

HM: Well, in my day in seminary, to be a married student was a rather rare thing. Most of us were married right after seminary graduation. I graduated from seminary in May of 1943, and we were married in June, the following month. Then in July of that year, we moved out to our first pastorate.

AP: Would it be normal for students to go straight from their college to seminary?

HM: Yes. And there, too, this is quite different from what it used to be. Because today, many seminary students are preparing themselves for second careers. Most of the students today are married. Many of the children of seminary students, I understand, go to Lincoln School, because that's the area of the city which is served by Lincoln School.

AP: Do you think there are any negatives or drawbacks to either way, either trend of going straight through or students coming back to seminary?

HM: Well, I think, probably, a person who goes to seminary as a second career, and eventually is ordained as a minister as a second career, has a broader background out of which he can enter into his first charge or responsibility, whatever that happens to be. On the other hand, if one goes directly from college to seminary, it gives you more years in which to be involved in active ministry. I guess that with the variety of students coming today, from a great many backgrounds, the discussions in the classes are much more lively than they used to be, because we were all pretty much of a homogeneous group. The members of my class all went into parishes, except one, who became a career missionary in Chiapas, Mexico. We were all from Reformed Churches, Dutch Reformed, German Reformed, which is certainly not true anymore today. Another thing, in my day in seminary, we didn't pay tuition. The denomination assumed the cost of theological education for seminary students, whereas today, they do pay tuition. I'm not sure how much it is, but I know that there is a tuition fee which is imposed. The cost of college education has also

increased remarkably, too. You probably cannot appreciate this, or maybe you don't see how it was possible, but in my day Hope College, from '38-40, the tuition cost was only \$125 a year.

AP: OK. No, I don't see how that was possible.

HM: (laughs) But it was. That was just for tuition, board and room, of course, was extra. But that, too, was correspondingly, relatively low priced. So I got a good education at Hope College for little money.

AP: That barely pays per credit now, 125.

HM: Is that right? Really?

AP: So even taking into account inflation, it still has gone much higher than that?

HM: Oh yes, that's right. Sure. But I still think that a Hope College education is worth what it costs. We are trying to persuade our grandson to go to Hope College. We're hopeful that he will, because we feel that this is a good school for him to go to. But, of course, the final decision has to be made by him.

AP: Are you familiar with any other schools or campuses. Can you speak to maybe what you think is special or unique about Hope?

HM: I'm not very familiar with them. Calvin College, of course, I know where that is and what it looks like. We've gone to basketball games at Olivet and Kalamazoo and Alma, but I really haven't gotten the feel for those campuses.

AP: Can you describe what it was like coming back to this area for your second church and what it was like being in Holland at that time and raising a family? You have three daughters?

HM: Yes. Well, of course, moving from New Era back to Holland, having been away for about six years, meant that we moved from a small rural community, into a larger community. There were many more civic, cultural, community opportunities here than there were there. In New Era, at that time, the center of community life was the church. I guess that's still true to some extent over there. In Holland, we had a larger church and we had more churches and we had more opportunity for fellowship with people from the college and the seminary, and with fellow pastors. When we lived in New Era, we felt rather isolated, because the nearest Reformed Church was about twelve miles away from us. Every month we would have a minister's meeting with other ministers and their wives from the classis, but they would live a considerable distance away. We would travel to Muskegon, Grand Haven, Allendale, places like that, because we craved fellowship with other people, like ourselves. Whereas in Holland, we were very close to each other. We felt that this was a broadening experience for us.

AP: How connected are the different churches here, either between all the Reformed Churches, or other denominations? What kind of a community would you say exists between those?

HM: In Holland, we have fifteen Reformed Churches, and about an equal number of Christian Reformed Churches. I think the spirit of cooperation between these two denominations is much better now than it was some years ago. For example, in our own congregation, we have pulpit exchanges between our church and the Pillar church. This is a good thing. And, of course, we have a better relationship, too,

with the protestants and the Catholics and the Lutherans and the Presbyterians.

There's a good feeling, I think, among the churches. I had the opportunity of serving the Classis of Holland for a period of seventeen years as Stated Clerk and Treasurer. That helped me get acquainted real well with the members of our own denomination in this area. In addition to that, I served as a board member at Western Seminary for six years, and on its executive committee for three or four years. I represented the Classis on the board of Annville Institute, in Annville, Kentucky for six years. I was on the board of Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa, for about five years. I also represented the classis on the general program council of the Reformed Church for six years. So, I had the opportunity to meet leaders from across the country as we'd sit down together at these board meetings. Even still today, as I serve as a senior pastor for the Board of Pensions, it helps me to be, well, stay current with ministers and their wives and their needs, their anxieties and their satisfactions, in retirement years.

AP: Could you describe someone in the community that has made a big impact on your life?

HM: Who has made a big impression on my life? Well, I think Dr. VanWylen, who was the president of Hope College for many years, was an outstanding leader, and still is, in some ways, in our community. So, I've appreciated a relationship with him. And the Jacobson's, who we've gotten to know in more recent years, as well. I would say, all the faculty at the seminary, with whom we enjoy a good relationship.

AP: What role would you say the recent diversification in Holland plays in the

community?

HM: Of course, Holland isn't the homogeneous Dutch town that it was some years ago. It's being changed all the time. It grows. As industry grows, of course we need more people to man these industries, so that we have people from different cultures and different races. I think it's good to have a diversified base of industry, because it makes for a strong economic base, so that if one industry is down a bit, economically, there's enough out there, still, to take up the slack. The result is that we are enjoying unprecedented economic growth in our community. Industrially, but also so far as the tourist industry is concerned. This is where Tulip Time, particularly, looms large. It brings in many, many people. There are a lot of people that come back to Holland and live in Freedom Village, or other areas like that, because at one time they went to Hope College, or they have family or friends who have settled in the area. On the other hand, diversification and growth, whereas we're grateful for it, also presents some challenges. Crime increases as a result of it, so we have to have more police people out here, men and women, on the police force. We need to build larger schools, our roads are becoming increasingly inadequate to carry the volume of traffic. So there are pluses and minuses, but all in all, we feel that Holland is really a good place in which to live, and work and retire.

AP: Last year, Holland was named one of the top ten All American Cities. I usually ask what qualities you think Holland has that distinguishes it as such? What do you think earned it that honor?

HM: Well, it's the people, of course, who give leadership to the city of Holland. I think

we have a very good mayor, in the person of Al McGeehan. Al, by the way, belongs to the same church that we do, First Reformed Church in Holland, we see him every Sunday morning. I think that Lou Hallacy, who is the executive secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, has done a lot for the economic growth of the community of Holland. It's a beautiful place in which to live, by the lake side. If you can take a few bad months in the wintertime, we have a very good climate here. Although it is almost a metropolitan area, it's not a big city like Chicago or Detroit, or something like that. People want to become increasingly, I think, decentralized, so far as the metropolitan areas are concerned. That's why we're seeing great growth here, on this side of the state. Educationally, too, I think we have a fine school system. We've been talking a lot about Hope College and the Seminary, but we have a fine Public School System here, and a Christian School System as well. People who are raising families are always concerned about the educational opportunities afforded to their children, and to their young people. Then, too, there's a strong religious flavor here. We have many fine congregations that offer a variety of programs. We're glad to open our doors for these people to come in. I think the churches are trying to meet the needs of the people as they come into Holland. So, I would say, the people, the climate, the tourism, the industry, the religious atmosphere here, makes Holland a good place in which to be.

AP: Where did your girls go to school?

HM: My girls, they all went to Hope College?

AP: Like, for high school, did they go to...?



HM: Oh, OK. All of our girls went to elementary school in Lincoln, they all went to Holland Junior High School, and the all graduated from Holland Senior High School, and they all graduated from Hope College.

AP: How did you choose which high school for them to attend?

HM: Well, having gone to the public school, it was only natural for them to continue on in the public school system. We felt that Holland had a fine public school system. We were pleased with the administration and with the faculty, the quality of education that was offered. So, it was just a natural thing for them to go there.

AP: I'm just curious, because some people have definite opinions about what's better to send there children to.

HM: We were satisfied with the public school system. My wife taught at the public school system for a number of years, too. She was a teacher before we got married. Then we got married and raised a family, so during that time, she was a busy homemaker and worked in the churches. But then, when our children got a little older, particularly when Carol, our oldest one, got to be a full time student at Hope College, she went into full time teaching. She taught during all the years that our girls were in Hope College, which was for ten years straight. Then when Barbara, our youngest daughter graduated from Hope, she said, "This is enough. I'm going to retire from teaching." So that was OK with me, too. But it helped a lot that she taught, that we could get our girls through Hope College, and they all appreciated that very much as well.

AP: Ten years straight of kids in college is really taxing. Then, all of your girls became

teachers.

HM: They all taught. Carol taught, for a number of years, in the Jenison area. She was an elementary teacher. Mary, our second daughter, lives in Holland, but teaches in Grand Haven. She teaches eighth grade English. Barbara lives in Holland, and she teaches remedial reading in the Zeeland Public Schools. So teaching is kind of in our family, I guess.

AP: Sounds like it. How have you seen the role of women change?

HM: The role of women changing? OK. As we indicated earlier, there are women attending seminary now, and women on the faculty of the seminary. So we have women being ordained as ministers, educators, and youth leaders in our churches. I have noticed, too, in the course of my life time, that women are much more active out in the work place now, than was true then. I can't document this with statistics, but I'm sure that a goodly percentage of homes have two people in the work place. Not only the husband, but the wife as well. This, too, has its advantages and its disadvantages. Economically, it's almost necessary to have two incomes today, because of the high cost of living. On the other hand, I feel we lose something because the home is not as closely knit anymore as when the mother was home as a homemaker. I know that children have to be taken out early in the morning and go to a day care center or something like that. Often times, when they come home in the afternoon, there's really no mother there to welcome them, and provide that kind of an atmosphere for them. So we lose something there. We find women today involved in almost every activity. On the police force. They've always been strong

in education, of course. We find them in the factory, in the offices, you name it, the women do it today. Even firemen.

AP: Have you had any opportunities in any of your service or any things you've been involved in to address these problems that have arisen because of the need for women to work? How would you address those problems, since it is usually an economic necessity that the woman works, to kind of alleviate that? How do you think we can work to alleviate those problems?

HM: One area in which our church has become involved within the last year is known as Kid's Hope USA. There are children in our schools who are at risk, and our church, and other churches in the community, too, for that matter, are asking for volunteers to give an hour a week to spend with one particular child, so that such a child may be rescued from that at risk category.

AP: I just talked to Carmen Hannah, who's at Van Raalte, last night, and she was talking about this program, too. I know she's very excited by it.

HM: As I listen, I think there are more and more churches that are becoming involved with that kind of program. Or the latch key program. You've heard of that, too, I'm sure. So the church's are addressing themselves, to try to meet a need, as a problem has arisen.

AP: I think, too, when other people get to know these kids, people who come from a different background or circumstances, and understand what the quality of their life is like and why it's necessary for both their parents to be working, that also promotes understanding and awareness, which is probably necessary, too.

HM: If there's a problem at home, it often shows up at school. I know that with our family, too, my wife, when she was teaching, and my daughters and their teaching profession, say that, often times, problem kids at school have these problems because of broken home relationships. There's something that disturbs a child. A child, a young person, needs a sense of security and well being at home. I feel, in that area, we've lost something, in recent years.

AP: How did the switch in the ministry occur for having women serve as ministers? Has that been a problem, how did that change happen?

HM: Well, like one of my former professors said about another denomination: "They encourage their girls to go to college and get a degree, and then they expect them to spend their time later on washing dishes at home." He said, "Women who have put so much into an education want to express themselves and use that education in recent years." I think maybe that's one factor.

AP: Do you think the consequences of that have been good, or have there been negative consequences?

HM: Well, like we indicated earlier, there are pluses and minuses to the situation. The advantage of it is, I think, that where there are two incomes, the children, the young people of that home, enjoy many benefits and the good things of life, which otherwise they couldn't have: better clothes, better cars, and, of course, all this sound equipment that costs a lot of money today. (laughs) So, they enjoy a higher standard of living. I think young people today have a much higher standard of living than I had when I was a young person. My mother didn't work outside the home. Women

were just expected to stay at home.

AP: What controversies have you experienced in Holland, or in the church?

HM: Controversy in Holland? Well, I can't say that my life has been so controversial, really. It's been pretty much on an even keel.

AP: Have there been any controversies within the community over issues?

HM: Well, in some churches, of course. Ecumenicity or non-ecumenicity, that's always a controversy, I think. In the course of my life time, there have been a few proposals for the Reformed Church to merge with other denominations. That would always involve a series of studies going over five or six years. It was always voted down, we are still an independent entity. Within the last year or two, there's a theological controversy, which is pretty much on the horizon, and that has come out of the Muskegon Classis, the Dick Rhen situation, particularly: on what basis and how is a person saved? There's still that controversy which is brewing. It's in the hands of the Classis at Muskegon at the present time. Then over the course of the years, we've gone through various revisions of the liturgy and of the liturgical forms. Whereas I can't say these were all highly controversial, yet there was difference of opinion as to how different sections should be stated. Who may come to the Lord's Table, should children be allowed to participate in the Lord's Table, in Communion? There's a difference of opinion in our churches in regard to that. Young people, should they be allowed to vote in congregational meetings. If so, how young, how old must they be?

AP: How would you say that the average problems and concerns of the Holland citizen

changed over the course of your life?

HM: We are not so actively involved in them anymore. We are kind of stepping aside now. The feeling that we have among retirees is, we're still interested, but we feel that we've had our day, and we're willing to step aside and let the young people, the men and the women fight the battles, if that's a proper way of describing it. But we'll always have the church at the very center of our hearts and for our lives, because our lives have been invested in it.

AP: How has that transition been for you, stepping out of your position and into retirement? What difficulties did you experience?

HM: Some ministers have a real hard time in retiring, because they've been so busy for so many years, and all of a sudden they don't do very much in their chosen vocation anymore. So far as we are concerned, we had no problem at all. When I retired from my parish, there was no one to immediately succeed me. So my Board of Elders asked me if I'd be willing to continue to do the pastoral work, until such a time as they had somebody else on the scene, which I agreed to do for them. I called on the sick and the shut-in and performed baptism, would serve as a pulpit supply occasionally, and serve the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I did that for a year, and at that time, they had secured the services of another pastor. Then at the end of that first year, the denomination needed somebody to serve as a Senior Pastor in this area. Reverend Al Popen, from the New York office, came here one evening, and he asked me if I'd be willing to do this for him. I said, "Well, Al, what does this involve?" He said, "You are the pastor of the local scene, and we'd like to have you

keep us in New York aware of the needs of the people: physical needs and financial needs and emotional needs. Then, report to us, at least on a quarterly basis, and see what we can do to help these people." I said to him at that time, "I'll try it for a year. If, at the end of the year, you feel that I'm not doing a good job, you can fire me, or if I don't like what I'm doing, I can quit." He said that sounds like a good deal. The result of it has been that I've served in this capacity for twelve years, and still enjoy what I'm doing. There are many people who are older who have some real needs. Then we joined First Reformed Church, and I've been on the staff there, and do some of their calling on the sick and shut ins. My retirement has been anything but boring, so I've found it very easy to make the adjustment. My wife has found it easy, too, because we have our own home. We have our family with whom we are involved. She's involved in the women's work at our congregation. So we have lots to keep us busy.

AP: What other kinds of things do you do to keep you busy, or are there any hobbies or organizations also?

HM: I guess our hobby is our work, really, for the most part. Gardening, photography. We've travelled quite a bit, too, in our retirement. We've hosted several trips to Europe for a travel agency in Grand Rapids. We've travelled to Hawaii. To celebrate our fiftieth wedding anniversary, we went on a tour to Israel. Last November, I went to Europe with a group of ten men from our congregation. Because, it was in the fall of 1846 that Van Raalte and his family left the Netherlands to come to America to establish what eventually became Holland, Michigan. As you

know, we are celebrating our Sesquicentennial this year. We worshipped in the place where he had served at one time, in the city of Omen. We travelled in other areas, too, in the northern provinces of the Netherlands. We became acquainted with the people over there, and some of their people have been here since that time, too. My wife's father was born in Germany, so often at the end of hosting a tour of two weeks, we would stay in Europe for an additional week or so, rent a car, and then go visit her relatives in Germany. So we visited a number of her cousins, and some of them have been here to visit us as well. So it's been kind of a nice retirement.

AP: How have your priorities changed over the course of your life?

HM: I think, probably, while I was in the active ministry I discovered that we had been trained to do three things, especially: preaching, teaching, and pastoral work. Whereas, in my retirement years, I would say that probably of those three phases, pastoral work has emerged as number one. Whereas when I was in the active ministry, I felt that preaching was number one. I spent more time in the preparation of sermons, in the preaching of sermons, looking for material for sermons, than I did in the other two phases. I don't do that so much anymore today. I would say today it's more pastoral. I think probably today, it's pastoral, preaching, and education. So, in that way, there's been a switch. In my pastoral work, particularly for the Board of Pensions, I have made recommendations for financial help for many, many people. There are many elderly, retired people in the church, particularly widows, who have some real needs. Ministers, their husbands, entered the ministry at a time when salaries were very low. They, for the most part, were not in social security, or



entered it at a later time in their life. So they had some financial needs. So, I'd help people pay rent, pay their taxes, buy hearing aids, buy glasses, put a new roof on their house. You name it, I've probably gotten it for them somewhere along the way. And they're very appreciative. I would say, for the denomination, we're doing a much better job now, in providing for our retired and active clergy than was true in former years.

AP: Have you found your commitment of faith gotten easier or harder?

HM: I wouldn't say it's been easier or harder, I think it's grown through the years. As one grows in years, one grows in spiritual understanding and commitment as well, I think. Every year becomes a bit more precious as one becomes older.

AP: Maybe as a final thing to think about, could you describe a turning point in your life?

HM: I think probably it came between my sophomore and junior years of college, during that year when I was undecided as to what direction my life should change. I was always very much involved in young people's work and Christian Endeavor in my own church, and attended district and state conventions for CE, as it was called at that particular time. I remember one night we were attending a district convention in a small church in northwest Iowa, and the guest minister at that service was Dr. George Menninga, who was a teacher of Bible at Central College in Pella, Iowa, at that time. What he said, and the way he challenged us, challenged me as a young person, that I really ought to become a minister. At the end of that year, working at home, I decided to come to Hope. In the meantime, Dr. Menninga had come from Central College to teach English Bible and Missions at Western Seminary. Whereas

he had been a motivating force in my life when he was at Central, it was interesting because later on he became one of my professors here. I've never been sorry with the decision that I made at that time. Some things I would change if I could live my life over. But, so far as my career is concerned, that I would not change. Like I said in my farewell sermon to my congregation some years ago, I said, "Some things I would change, I realize I've made some mistakes, but two things I'd like to leave with you: I think we did our best, and secondly, we did what we thought was right."

AP: Are there any areas that we didn't talk about that you thought you'd like to talk about?

HM: No, I think we've covered the field pretty well. I've been so involved in this for so long that I don't know much different.

AP: Well, I think that would probably wrap that up unless there are any final comments that you have.

HM: OK. No. Thanks for coming today.

AP: Thank you.